National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News

January 2002

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Inside this issue:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HRSA
Health Resources & Services Administration

On-Line EFT Authorization Coming Soon!

On February 11, 2002, the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) will introduce on-line Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization. At that time, entities will be able to establish, modify, and deactivate EFT accounts efficiently on the NPDB-HIPDB web site through a secure encrypted connection, eliminating the need to complete a paper form. **Paper *EFT Authorization* forms postmarked after February 28, 2002, will not be accepted by the Data Banks.**

Currently, entities download, complete, and submit paper EFT forms to the Data Banks, then await confirmation by mail that an EFT account has been established successfully. When a modification to the EFT account is required (e.g., the account number or bank routing number changes), the entity must download the entire EFT form, make changes to the pertinent fields, and then send the completed form to the Data Banks for processing. EFT account terminations currently require written entity correspondence to the Data Banks. These EFT-related processes will improve in February, when an entity can submit changes to EFT information electronically, eliminating the need to download, complete, sign, and send a form to the Data Banks. The new on-line EFT Authorization will simplify the tasks of establishing a new EFT account, modifying an existing EFT account, and terminating an EFT account.

The new EFT authorization process requires that entities simply enter EFT account information at the appropriate IQRS screens, print the formatted copy, sign and date it, and send it to the Data Banks for processing. Entities will no longer need to wait for a mailed response from the Data Banks to confirm that an EFT account has been set up. Instead, entities will receive electronic verification that the EFT account has been successfully established through the IQRS' new Data Bank Correspondence feature—also coming in February.

*See **On-Line EFT Authorization** on page 4*

New Name for DQA

As of October 2001, the Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) is known as the Division of Practitioner Data Banks (DPDB). The DPDB is the Government agency responsible for administering the Data Banks. Matters dealing specifically with legal interpretation of statutory and regulatory authority should be directed to: Associate Director for Policy, DPDB Policy and Analysis Branch, 7519 Standish Place, Suite 300, Rockville MD 20857.

Requests for general information about the Data Banks, as well as requests for Dispute and Secretarial Review materials, should continue to be directed to: National Practitioner Data Bank-Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank, P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832 (4094 Majestic Lane, PMB-332, Fairfax, VA 22033 for overnight delivery services).

Fresh New Look for NPDB-HIPDB Web Site

The new NPDB-HIPDB web site is here! From the home page, view the exciting new Quick List Icons feature. With just one click of the mouse, you can access the IQRS, the on-line Self-Query Service, frequently used NPDB-HIPDB forms, or the interactive NPDB and HIPDB training programs. For a preview of the web site's new look, see the redesigned NPDB-HIPDB home page (Figure 1).

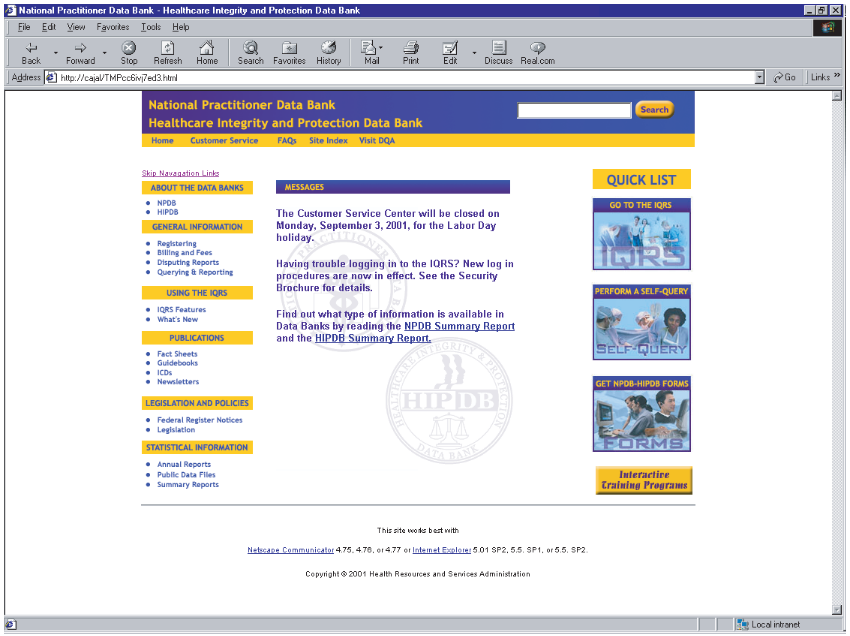

Figure 1. New NPDB-HIPDB Home Page

The Quick List Icons feature allows users to navigate the web site more quickly and minimizes time spent searching for information.

The new design organizes information logically and efficiently, and allows people using special accessibility devices to better interact with the web site.

Visit today at *www.npdb-hipdb.com* and be sure to bookmark the home page in order to view important up-to-date messages.

Watch for future issues highlighting more exciting new features of the improved web site.

Helpful Hints from the Data Banks

✓ PREVENT IQRS PASSWORD LOCK-OUTS

Your user password is valid for 180 days. The system will prompt you 5 days before it expires. If you do not change your password before it expires, one grace login is provided. At the grace login, a warning message indicates that your password must be changed immediately; otherwise, it will expire and you will be denied future IQRS access.

On the *User Account Information* screen that follows, you must enter your old password, followed by a new password of your choice (entered twice, to confirm that you typed it accurately).

Important: You must click the **SAVE** button to save your changes. If you do not click **SAVE**, your new password will not take effect.

Users who forget their passwords or have expired passwords should contact their entity administrator to reset their passwords.

Administrators who forget their passwords or have expired passwords must contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732 for assistance.

✓ DON'T DELAY! QUERY RESPONSES AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME

Query responses are available for download on the IQRS for 30 days from the date the query is processed via the IQRS or Interface Control Document Transfer Protocol (ITP). You must retrieve responses within that timeframe. Failure to retrieve a response within the 30-day timeframe will require you to resubmit your query. If you wish to save query responses beyond the 30-day period, you must save them to your hard drive.

✓ SAFEGUARD YOUR DBID

Your Data Bank Identification Number (DBID) is the unique number that identifies your entity to the NPDB-HIPDB. It is essential that DBIDs are safeguarded to prevent inadvertent disclosure.

When calling the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center, please be ready to provide your DBID to an information specialist. You must include your DBID on all correspondence to the Data Banks.

IQRS Debuts On-Line Agent Designation

Beginning in February, entities can add, update, and deactivate authorized agent relationships on-line. This new process increases efficiency, eliminating the need for paper correspondence between the entity and agent. **Paper *Authorized Agent Designation* forms postmarked after February 28, 2002, will not be accepted by the Data Banks.** The on-line agent designation functionality will be accessible to the entity and agent administrator and will operate through the same secure encrypted connection as the IQRS.

Authorized Agent Policy

Eligible entities may elect to have outside organizations query or report to the NPDB-HIPDB on their behalf. An outside organization that queries or reports to the NPDB-HIPDB on an entity's behalf is referred to as an authorized agent.

Authorized agents must meet the specific requirements as outlined in the *Fact Sheet on Authorized Submitters and Authorized Agents*, available at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*.

New Data Bank Correspondence Functionality

The *Data Bank Correspondence* screen (Figure 2) will enable an entity to view the status of a previously submitted Agent Designation Request. An Agent Designation Request is a request by an entity to authorize an agent to query and/or report to the Data Bank(s) on its behalf. The *Data Bank Correspondence* screen also allows an agent to electronically accept or decline an Agent Designation Request.

Currently, an entity downloads and completes a paper *Authorized Agent Designation* form when assigning a new authorized agent to report to or query the Data Banks on its behalf. A form is also required when updating entity/agent relationship data, such as response routing and query fees information. The on-line agent designation process will simplify the establishment of entity/agent relationships with the new Data Bank Correspondence functionality, which will allow entity and agent administrators to communicate with one another electronically.

The following are a few common scenarios using the new on-line agent designation process:

1. **Entity Initiates On-Line Agent Designation**

An entity identifies an agent to query and/or report on its behalf and reaches a business arrangement with the agent. [Note: The agent must already be registered with the Data Bank(s).] The entity obtains the last four digits of the agent's DBID, Agent Organization Name as registered with the Data Bank(s), City, State, and ZIP Code. Once the entity obtains the necessary information, the entity logs into the IQRS and follows the instructions to designate an authorized agent. After the entity certifies the information, the Agent Designation Request is sent electronically to the agent through Data Bank correspondence. At this point, the entity notifies the agent administrator to log into the IQRS to approve the entity's request.

2. **Agent Responds to Entity's Request**

An agent views an entity's Agent Designation Request by selecting **VIEW DATA BANK CORRESPONDENCE** from the *Administrator Options* menu. The *Data Bank Correspondence* screen enables the agent to electronically accept or decline an Agent Designation Request. An authorized agent can accept or decline the entity's request, or temporarily defer the decision (the information remains available in the agent administrator's Data Bank Correspondence mailbox for 30 days after it is opened. After the 30-day

See **Agent Designation** on page 5

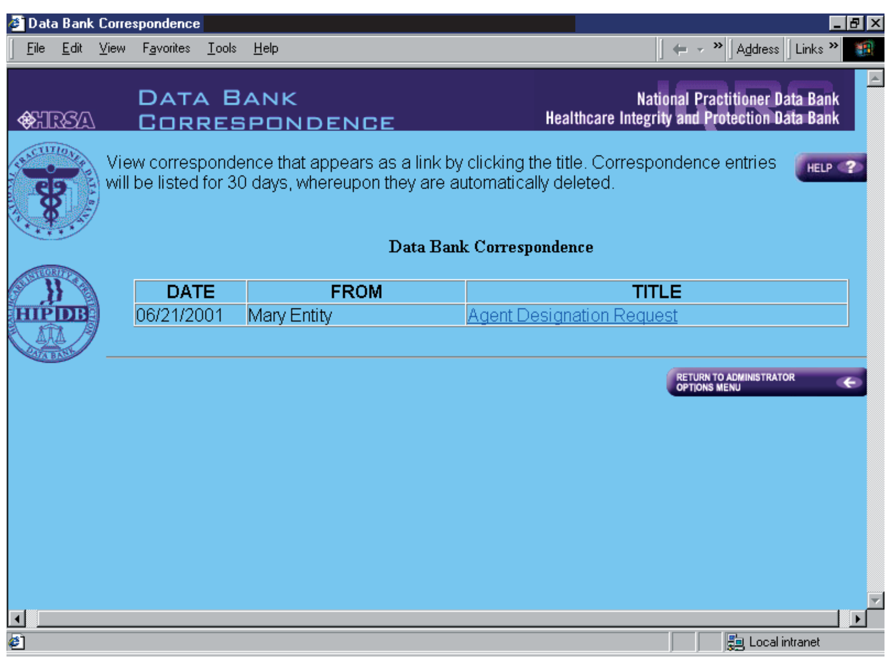

Figure 2. Data Bank Correspondence Screen

On-Line EFT Authorization *from page 1*

New Data Bank Correspondence Features

The *Data Bank Correspondence* screen will provide on-line notification to the entity administrator once an EFT account has been successfully established, replacing the paper verification form that is currently sent to entities through U.S. mail. The *Data Bank Correspondence* screen will also enable entity administrators to view the status of a previously submitted Agent Designation Request, and will allow an authorized agent to electronically accept or decline an Agent Designation Request. For more information on the new agent designation process, see *IQRS Debuts On-line Authorized Agent Designation* on page 3.

Establishing an EFT Account On-Line

In February, the *EFT Authorization* screen (Figure 3), accessible from the *Administrator Options* screen, will permit an entity to specify a checking or savings account from which query fees may be debited. The process is straightforward—the administrator simply inputs the bank account number and bank routing number in the spaces provided on the *EFT Authorization* screen. After certifying the EFT authorization on-line, the administrator clicks **SUBMIT TO DATA BANKS** and follows the instructions on the *EFT Authorization Status* screen. Query charges are deducted automatically from the EFT account designated by the entity. Unlike credit card payments, the user does not need to enter EFT information when creating a query.

An entity or authorized agent may have only one active EFT account at any time. If an entity's EFT information changes, the entity should notify the Data Banks by modifying the existing EFT account. An entity can easily modify an existing EFT account by clicking **AUTHORIZE ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (EFT)** on the *Administrator Options* screen, and then select **MODIFY EFT ACCOUNT** from the *EFT Options* screen.

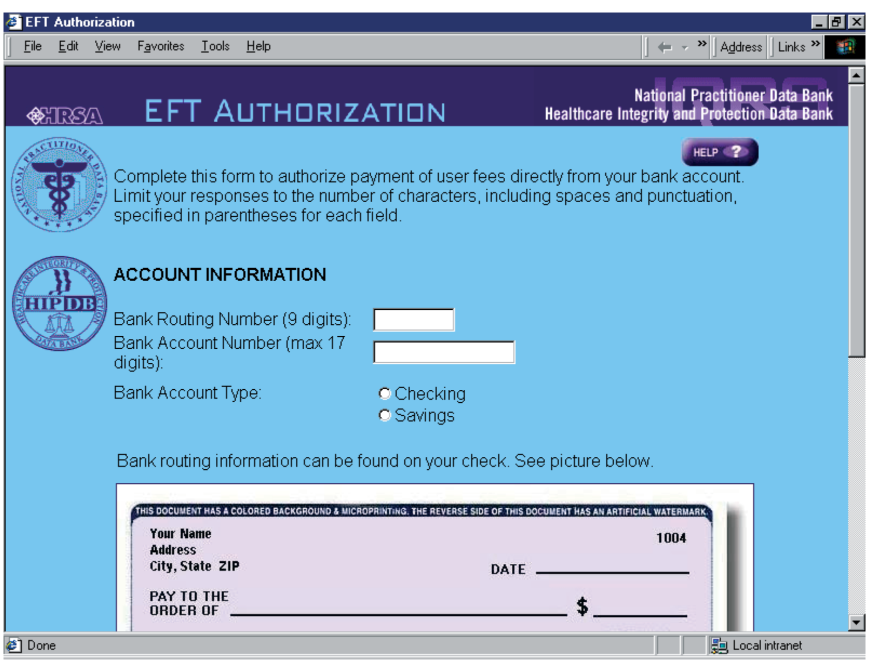

Figure 3. EFT Authorization Screen

Terminating an Existing EFT Account

Entities may use the termination feature to prevent future use of an existing EFT account. If an entity elects to stop using EFT as a method of payment and chooses instead to pay for queries with a credit card, the entity selects **TERMINATE EFT ACCOUNT** from the new *EFT Options* screen, enters the reason for terminating the EFT, certifies the information, and clicks **SUBMIT TO DATA BANK(S)**. Entities will receive electronic correspondence from the Data Banks when this transaction is complete.

NAMSS Conference Highlights

The National Association Medical Staff Services (NAMSS) Annual Conference, themed "25 Years of Success—Chicago Style," was held October 22 through 24, with an exhibition beginning on October 21. The 2½ day conference was held in downtown Chicago, and included educational work-shops, celebration activities, networking opportunities, and an exhibition with key industry vendors.

The NPDB-HIPDB was one of the organizations represented in the exhibition. The NPDB-HIPDB booth featured an on-line demonstration of the new NPDB interactive training program, a preview of the redesigned information web site, and highlights of upcoming IQRS changes.

Agent Designation *from page 3*

period has elapsed, it is deleted from Data Bank Correspondence).

The agent electronically accepts or declines the entity/agent relationship. If the agent declines the request, it is asked to provide a reason. The agent's response is then forwarded electronically to the entity administrator as Data Bank correspondence. The entity/agent relationship is not activated until the agent adminstrator logs into the IQRS and approves the request.

If the agent accepts the entity's request, the entity administrator receives a confirmation message in the Data Bank Correspondence mailbox. If the authorized agent declines the request, a message provides the entity with the agent's reason for refusal. If appropriate, the entity may amend and resubmit the Agent Designation Request for the agent's approval. This feature makes it easier and more efficient to successfully establish an entity/agent relationship.

3. Entity Modifies an Existing Entity/Agent Relationship

An entity administrator can elect to change the routing of query responses or fees by selecting an agent with an "Active" status and editing the relevant information. Query responses and fees can be routed to either the entity or the agent.

4. Entity Terminates an Existing Entity/Agent Relationship

An entity administrator also may deactivate an authorized agent previously designated to query and/or report to the Data Bank(s) on behalf of the entity. Deactivation terminates the entity/agent relationship and prevents the agent from querying and/or reporting for the entity.

For more information on authorized agents and instructions on how to establish, modify, or terminate an entity/agent relationship, click **HELP** on the *Agent Information* screen.

Establishing User Accounts

Did you know that entity administrators have the ability to set up additional user accounts? Setting up individual user accounts can help administrators monitor the actions of other users. It may be especially helpful to track changes made for your entity once the ability to designate authorized agents and authorize EFT accounts goes on-line on February 11, 2002. In setting up individual user accounts, you can identify the user that made a particular change.

Managing User IDs

Each entity must maintain an administrator account. The administrator account oversees all other user accounts that interact with the IQRS using the entity's DBID.

The administrator account is the *only account* that may add, edit, and delete other user accounts for the entity. One administrator account may oversee an unlimited number of additional user accounts. If your entity has a single person using the IQRS, you may choose to use the administrator account as your regular user account. If, however, several people access the IQRS on behalf of your entity, you may wish to establish additional user IDs for those individuals.

To add a user account, select **MAINTAIN USER ACCOUNTS** on the *Options* screen to display the *Maintain User Account* screen. Only the administrator can access the *Maintain User Account* screen. To create a new user ID, click **ADD**. The *User Account Information* screen displays, where you may add information on a new user. User IDs may be deleted by selecting **DELETE**.

Assigning User Passwords

Administrators must create the initial passwords for any new user IDs that they create. To create a password for a user account, highlight the user's account information on the *Maintain User Account* screen and click **EDIT**. The administrator may then enter a password for the user on the *User Account Information* screen.

Administrators can edit user passwords in the same manner in which they create them, by following the instructions above. Non-administrator users may also access the *User Account Information* screen and edit their own passwords by selecting **CHANGE PASSWORD** on the *Options* screen. Users who forget their passwords or have expired passwords should contact their entity administrators to reset them.

For more information, and examples of valid user IDs and passwords, see the *Fact Sheet on User IDs and Passwords*, available on the NPDB-HIPDB web site.

Easy EFT: 4 Ways to Prevent Potential Problems

Entities can easily elect to pay for query charges using EFT by completing and submitting an *Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization* form. (Note: After February 2002, entities must authorize EFT transactions using the on-line service. See *On-Line EFT Authorization Coming Soon!* on page 1 for more information.) Here are a few tips to help ensure that your EFT transactions are processed accurately and efficiently:

TIP #1: Check Your EFT Verification. Entities receive verification once an EFT account has been established successfully (this process can take two to three weeks). Please verify the information for accuracy. If there are any errors, mark corrections on the document, sign and date it, and return it to the Data Banks. If the information is correct, retain it for future reference.

TIP #2: Ensure Adequate Funds. Entities are responsible for ensuring that adequate funds are present in their accounts at the time queries are submitted to avoid interruption and potential termination of services with the Data Banks.

TIP #3: Notify the Data Banks of Changes. If your entity's EFT information changes (e.g., routing number, bank account information), please make sure that you notify the Data Banks of the change(s). This ensures smooth and continuous service.

TIP #4: Keep Your Accounting Department Informed. To prevent confusion and unnecessary billing reconciliations, entities are requested to inform their accounts payable offices of any query charges that they incur.

For additional information on EFT and other billing concerns, see the *Fact Sheet on Query Fees* and the *Fact Sheet on Viewing Billing History Through the IQRS*, also available on-line.

On the Horizon...

In May 2002, ITP users will be able to access their billing histories via the IQRS. Also coming that month is improved Revision to Action reporting guidance (with explicit on-screen instructions and an informative help file). Beginning in August 2002, the IQRS will allow the reporting of multiple Adverse Action Classification codes; the system will also include expanded Basis for Action and Practitioner Specialty codes.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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